THE

Weekly Comedy:

OR, THE

Humours of a *Coffee-House*.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

Levy, *a Recruiting Officer.*	Venture, *a Merchant.*	Double, *a Time-ſerver.*
Hazard, *a Gameſter.*	Talley, *a Stock-Jobber.*	Bays, *a Poet.*
Bite, *a Sharper.*	Querpo, *a Quack.*	Log, *a Mariner.*
Nice, *a Beau.*	Trick, *a Lawyer.*	Harlem, *a News-writer.*
Blunt, *a Plain Dealer.*	Grim, *an Aſtrologer.*	Guzzle, *a Hard Drinker.*
Whim, *a Projector.*	Froth, *a Punſter.*	Bohee, *the Coffee-man.*

Note, Theſe Perſons are introduc'd only as occaſion ſerves.

From **Wednesday** Auguſt the 20th, to **Wednesday** Auguſt the 27th, 1707.

Enter Harlem, Talley, *and* Blunt.

Harlem. NOW, Boys, toſs up your *Bonnets*; I have ſuch rare *News* to tell you, that one Ounce of it is worth a Pound of *Divinity*.

Talley. Say you ſo, Mr. *Harlem*; pray let's hear it? For at this Juncture, I confeſs, a little good News would be as welcome to us *Wagerers*, as a Soul-ſaving Lecture to a *Deſpairing Puritan*; for we know not what to think of it.

Harlem. Then I'll tell you. It is agreed on, by all Hands, That *Toulon* is certainly Surrender'd; and *Bow-Bells* Rung till Eleven a Clock on *Friday* Night, to welcome in the Joyful News of their Capitulation, tho' it did not arrive till Ten a Clock on *Saturday* Morning.

Blunt. How, how? That's a downright *Iriſhciſm*, as bad as *Teague's* Blunder, who, in Lamenting the Loſs of his Friend, ſaid, *That he Dyed to Morrow and was to be Buryed Yeſterday.* ——— Pray, by what *Enthuſiaſtick Spirit* of *Prophecy* could the Bells foretell over Night what News we ſhould have next Morning?

Talley. That's a Puzzling Queſtion, and only engages Mr. *Harlem* to keep us in Suſpence. Pray give him leave to declare the News without Interruption.

Harlem. There is no way to anſwer Mr. *Blunt*, but by a *Rowland* for his *Oliver*. Therefore, by way of Retort. I'll tell you, Sir, A Gentleman being Affronted by a Tradeſman that he dealt with, order'd his Footman, who was an *Iriſhman*, to go and Cane him in his Shop; which the Fellow performing according to the Commands of his Maſter, was taken up by the Aſſiſtance of the Neighbours, and for the Aſſault carry'd before a *Juſtice of the Peace*, who aſk'd him, *What was the Reaſon he had offer'd ſuch an Abuſe to a Civil Perſon without any Provocation?* To which the *Iriſhman* anſwer'd, *Hub Bubbo, by my Shoul, he dat ſet me to Work ſhould be aſk'd dat Queſtion.* —— So that if you would know how the Bells came to be ſo Merry the Night before the News was arriv'd, you muſt enquire of thoſe that gave order for their Ringing, and that's the beſt way to be ſatisfy'd.

Talley. A Preparative againſt Good News, is ſometimes as neceſſary as a Sugar-Plumb after Bad. —— But pray, Mr. *Harlem*, what News have you? For I am upon Thorns till I hear it.

Harlem. We have Advice from *Holland*, (and you know they are a People that won't tell a Lye to gain the Univerſe) That we are Maſters of the Royal Fort at *Toulon*; have forc'd 'em to Sink ſome, and Burn the reſt of their Shipping in the Harbour; That we have Bombarded the Town with ſuch Succeſs as to Fire it in ſeveral places near the *Store-Houſes*, and have made ſuch a wonderful Progreſs in the Siege, as to force 'em to a Capitulation, in order to Surrender upon the Nineteenth Inſtant, which, according to *N. S.* muſt be their Eight. And is not this moſt Glorious News, well worth the hearing of a True-Born *Engliſhman?*

Talley. Is this all the News you have in your Budget? This grew ſo Stale in leſs than one Afternoon, that in a matter of three Hours time it had quite worn it ſelf out of Credit with the Publick.

Blunt. I was fearful when I firſt heard it that the News was too good to be true; becauſe I found our *Wagering Gudgeons* were a little Shy of the Bait.

Harlem. I can aſſure you, the Advice came from *Holland*, and I am almoſt ready to take any thing for *Goſpel* that is but Tranſmitted from ſo Religious a Country.

Blunt. I know not what to think of it; but I have always obſerv'd the *Proteſtants* and *Papiſts* differ as much in their News, as they do in their Religion, and are both apt to Flatter themſelves with ſuch Incredible Extreams, that the beſt way is to turn *Moderator* between 'em both, as to matter of News, and ſo remain indifferent to either.

Talley. Fie, fie, Mr. *Blunt*; you talk now as if you were a *High Flyer.*

Blunt. How can that be, when I tell you I'm for *Moderation?* But I have always obſerv'd among you *City-Mammonites*, I mean you *Stock-Jobbers* and *Wagerers*, that if a Man will not comply with you, to Talk like a *Knave*, or a *Fool*, he muſt preſently be diſtinguiſh'd by ſome Odious Apellation or other; or at leaſt ſuch a Name or Character as you endeavour to make ſo.

Harlem. But pray, Sir, what News is this, you ſeem to hint to us, that is Contradictory to the former?

Blunt. The *French* News. What News d'ye think?

Harlem. French News! ha, ha, ha! A Man

Man would as ſoon believe *Tranſubſtantiation*; or, *The Renown'd Hiſtory of the Seven Champions*. I'll juſtifie the *French Gazette* is but a meer *Popiſh Libel*, that is always ſtuff'd as full of Groſs Lies, and Partial Flatteries, as a *Jacobite Pamphlet*, or a Poor *Poet*'s *Dedication*.

Talley. But pray, Mr. *Blunt*, what do the *French* ſay of *Toulon*? I love to hear how an Enemy Curtails the Truth, when Matters make againſt 'em; tho' I know their Accounts, like *Harlots* Stories, are always in favour of themſelves, and therefore not to be Credited.

Blunt. News, I acknowledge, is generally a Politick Medicine, made up ſo Cunningly that it proves an *Elixir* to one Side, and *Poyſon* to the other: But the uſeful Receipt is now grown ſo common, that the *Machiavelion Quacks* of all Nations Practice the ſame way, and adminiſter a great deal of *Batter* with their *Brimſtone* to allay the Itch of the People.

Harlem. But as to the *French* News, let us have it in Groſs, without Mincing or Refining.

Blunt. Take it as you will, I ſhall deal fairly by you. ——The *French* are ſo far from agreeing with your *Dutch* Advice, That they tell us, Mayſhal *de Teſſe* Beat the Beſiegers out of their Trenches; Kill'd a Thouſand; Took Three Hundred Priſoners; Nail'd up their Cannon; Plunder'd their Tents; Took Bag and Baggage, and remain'd in Poſſeſſion of their Trenches when the Letters were diſpatch'd to *Verſails* with this Intelligence; and all this Mighty Action perform'd with the Loſs of no more than Eighty or Ninty Men.

Harlem. Ha, ha, ha! This is News would make a *Dog* Laugh more than a *Beau* at a *Comedy*; but I hope you are not ſo much *Frenchify'd* as to believe a Tittle of it.

Blunt. I have often told you I Credit no News till it's Confirm'd by the *Government*; and the *Tower* Guns Roar it thro' the Town, as if it was Proclaim'd by *Jove*'s Thunder; till the very Air ſmells as ſtrong of *Brimſtone* and *Salt-Peter*, as the inſide of a *Powder-Mill*; and the Heavens look as Red with the Reflection of our Bonfires, as they will over *Toulon*, when their *Fleet*'s on Fire in their Harbour.

Talley. A Pox upon the *French*; their own Country Diſtemper; True or Falſe I do not like it; I muſt ſcoure into *Change Alley* to be better ſatisfy'd; for as I have heard Mr. *Bays* ſay,

What may be, may be not, if ſo,
What mayn't be, may be, t'r ought we know.
[Talley *Exit*.]

Harlem. You have put Mr. *Talley* into ſuch a fright with your *French* News, that except he be thoroughly convinc'd there is nothing in it, by his Brother *Stock-Jobbers*, he'll go near to Perfume the *Change* to Day with a foul Pair of Breeches; for he has at leaſt a Thouſand Pounds upon the Taking *Toulon*.

Blunt. They make a Bluſtering and a Noiſe, but not One in Ten of 'em will do what they pretend to, when they meet with any Body that will cloſe with 'em; not but I know a great many *Fools* are drawn in, and a great many *Knaves* have got the advantage of 'em.

Harlem. It lies not in your way to know ſo much of that matter as I do; I can aſſure you, Sir *What-you-call-him Fire-place*, but the other Day, took a Hundred Guineas, upon ſome certain Intelligence that I gave him, to pay a Thouſand if *Toulon* was not Taken by the laſt of this Month; and I know many other as Conſiderable *Wagers*, now depending upon the ſame Contingency.

Blunt

Blunt. I am very well ſatisfy'd all thoſe Extravagant Wagers, where the Inequality is ſo great, are nothing but meer Shoeing-Horns to draw on Money'd *Fools*, that ſee not thro' the Cunning, to Venture that in Reality, which others Lay, or Offer, but in Jeſt; for no Man that has Brains would run the hazard of Loſing a Golden Mountain, to Win but a Mole-Hill of the ſame Metal, leſt his Riches were ſo great as to prove Burthenſome, and that he hop'd, that Light'ning his Wealth might be the Leſſening of his Trouble.

Harlem. Ah, Sir, you are wonderfully miſtaken; would time permit, I could tell you another Story, —— but I muſt away to the *Poſt-Office* for my Letters; and next time I ſee you I'll Unriddle the Miſtery.—— Yours

[Harlem *Exit.*]

Blunt. (Aſide.) Now the World's grown Mad; every *Fool* ſets up for a *Conjurer*. Becauſe he has the Knack of pleaſing *Coxcombs*, like himſelf, with a little Fabulous Intelligence, he thinks himſelf Wiſe enough to Explicate every thing, tho' the Blockhead knows nothing beyond the Uncertainty of his own *News-Papers*.—— A Diſh of *Coffee* here.

Bohee. You ſhall have it, Sir. *(Brings it.)*

Blunt. Prithee, Mr. *Bohee*, ſit down a little, I have ſomething to ſay to you, now your *Coffee-Room*'s ſo empty.

Bohee. I am always at your Service, Sir.

Blunt. Pray what think you of theſe various Reports, ſo Contradictory to each other, that keeps your *City-Wagerers* ſo Terribly upon the Wrack, that they Neſtle about from *Coffee-Houſe* to *Coffee-Houſe*, as if they had Nettles in their Breeches.

Bohee. It's all *Stock-Jobbing* News Coin'd in the *Wagerers Mint*, and Induſtriouſly ſcatter'd up and down by a parcel of *Underſtrapping Agents*, and a few *Penny-getting Printers*; we have nothing yet to be depended on as a certainty.

Blunt. Many of the Wagerers ſeem to be as poſitive both ways; each according as they have ventur'd their God, as if they had been Eye-Witneſſes of the whole Proceedings, which ſhews their Opinions and Reports are only Grounded upon their *Intereſt*, and not upon their *Intelligence*.

Bohee. The moſt Rational Conjecture I can make is, That a Knot of *Stock-Jobbing Canary-Birds* are enter'd into a Combination to bite the reſt of the *Wagerers* that are out of their Confederacy; for by ſham Wagers, one among another, contracted in Publick, back'd with ſuch falſe Rumours, and pretended Letters of *Intelligence*, as are ſuitable to their purpoſes they advance, lower, and remove the Odds *Pro*, and *Con*, as their Deſigns require; ſo that by taking the Odds on both ſides, let the Town be Taken, or not Taken, they are aſſur'd to be Winners.

Blunt. I cannot yet underſtand this Miſtery rightly; pray make it more plain by a familiar Inſtance?

Bohee. I will. As for Example, Suppoſe, That according to the Courſe of the News, it is two to one but that *Toulon* will be in the Hands of the Allies by ſuch a Day, and you take the Odds by giving Fifty Guineas, to receive a Hundred and Fifty in caſe it be Taken by the Time limitted, and in a few Days after, either by the Arrival of ſome real News, wherein our Succeſs is made much more doubtful, or by the Stratagems and Contrivance of the Grand Cabal, the Odds change their Side, and you give Fifty Guineas to receive a Hundred and Fifty if it be in the Hands of the Allies within the Time before limitted, and when you have this laid, let Matters go as they will, you are ſure to win Fifty Guineas. Now I hope you underſtand it, and I can aſſure you, ſince their firſt Wagering, thoſe that rightly underſtood their Advantage, have had ſeveral Opportunities of making themſelves Winners, after the ſame manner as I have now Stated it.

Blunt. I confeſs you have now given me a clear Idea of the Matter, for which I thank you. ——At preſent I am a little in haſte, ſo Farewel.

[*Exit.*]

Bohee. You are Welcome, Sir.

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